



Bluegrassin'

Volume 6, Issue 3

May – June 2004

The Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association is a non-profit association dedicated to promoting preserving and sharing our love of bluegrass music in a spirit of family and friendship.

Inside this issue:

Bluegrass Calendar ... page 1

Recurring Shows ... page 1 and Jams

Prez's Notes ... page 2

CD reviews ... page 3

Garrison Campout info ... page 3

Pete Wernick's band workshop ... page 4

Everett Lilly Concert info ... page 4

Song selection for CD ... page 4

Wintergrass review ... page 5

Conroy's campout info ... page 5

Festival pictures ... page 6

More festival pictures ... page 7

How To Get Rid Of Your In-Laws This Summer ... Page 8

Hospitality Room At Wintergrass ... Page 9

An Invite From Dodd's ... Last page



Bluegrass Calendar

- ◆ **May 23, 2004** – Everett Lilly Concert
See article on page 4
- ◆ **May 28 – 31, 2004** – Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout. See article page 5.
- ◆ **May 30 – June 6, 2004** – Pasture Pickin' Libby MT.
For further info call Dale or Dorothy at 406-293-6608
- ◆ **June 21-27, 2004** – Rodeo Pickin', Newport Wa. Join in the jammin'.
Come early for lots of bluegrass and country music. Stringed instruments only. Dry camping behind the rodeo grounds at the corner of First Street and Garden Avenue. For more information contact Ralph Bilbee at 205-437-2044 or Bob Mollenkopf at 208-437-3375.
- ◆ **June 25 – 27, 2004** – Garrison Junction Campout at the Riverside RV Park. Page 3 for details.
- ◆ **July 9 – 11, 2004** – Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival
Ravalli County Fairgrounds, Hamilton, Mt
- ◆ **July 24, 2004** The 5th Annual Big Spring Creek Bluegrass Rendezvous is scheduled for July 24, 2004 in Lewistown. It will be held in the Gazebo area at the Fergus County Fairgrounds. Camping Friday night and Saturday. Lots of jamming opportunities.
Three great bands: Left Over Biscuits; Sagegrass Ramblers; & Spur Of The Moment. Bands begin at 2:00 pm. Open mic opportunities. Call 538-7127 or 538-8854 for further information.
- ◆ **August 27 – 29, 2004** – Bannock County Bluegrass Festival
1st Annual festival to be held at the Bannock County Fair grounds, 10560 N. Fairgrounds Rd. Pocatello, Idaho 83205
info: 360-436-1179 or 208-234-0200
WEBSITE: www.bannockcountybluegrassfestival.com
performing...LeftOver Biscuits, New South Fork, & Mike & Tari Conroy

Recurring Show and Jams

- ◆ Every Tuesday night, 7 p.m. – Open bluegrass jam at the Top Hat, 134 W. Front Street, Missoula followed by Pinegrass around 10 p.m.
- ◆ Every Thursday night, 6-8 p.m. – Live bluegrass with Mountain Groan and Friends at the Golden Corral, Hwy 93S, Missoula. Call Raynae at 721-5205 for information.
- ◆ 3d Friday Each Month – Bluegrass jam at the Avalanche Creek Coffeehouse, 1st Avenue East, Kalispell. Contact Vicki at 257-3935 or vbodfish@digisys.net for information.

President's Notes

Our fifth annual Oldtime Bluegrass Festival was a real success. The move to the Stevensville High School Multipurpose Room was a good decision. The facilities were excellent with much improved acoustics and plenty of room for jamming and bands to warm up before going on stage. Turnout was excellent, the music was great and the association ended up raising \$2,156.03 to promote and preserve bluegrass music over the next year.

There's plenty of people to thank for these results and I will try to recognize those involved:

- All of you loyal supporters who attended and made this such a good event.
- The musicians who donated their time and expense, many coming from many miles away,

and made such wonderful music. Without their effort, the festival would not be possible.

- The volunteers who staffed the admissions table, prepared and served food, sold merchandise and helped clean up.
- Mike and Tari Conroy for lining up the bands, providing the sound system, recording the sessions and doing a hundred other things to make this a special event.
- Dennis Kimzey, the Stevensville School Superintendent, and his staff who provided the facility and went out of their way to help make this a successful event. Harvey Alderman, a school custodian, did an especially good job in helping us hold things together during the event.
- Joan Prather of the Stevensville Main Street Association and the merchants of Stevensville who made us all feel welcome in the community.

Success of this event is essential to the future of the Montana Rockies Association and thanks again for support..

Spring is here and the Northwest bluegrass scene is heating up. The association is hosting Everett Lilly and the Lilly Mountaineers at the Chantilly Theater on Sunday, May 23d. Everett and his brother were pioneers in bluegrass music and you should not miss this performance. Following, the next weekend is the Conroy Campout at the West Fork. If you aren't full of bluegrass with that topnotch event, Pasture Pickin' is the next week in Libby. Check out the calendar for more information on these events.

We still need folks to provide input for the newsletter. Send Tari Conroy any articles, cartoons or any other bluegrass information you think would be of interest and we will include it in the newsletter.

Ben

Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association

333 Pine Hollow Road, Stevensville, MT 59870
(406) 777-7028

Website: www.mtbluegrass.com email: mrba@mtbluegrass.com

President – Ben Essary (406) 777-7028 bguessary@msn.com **Vice President** – Mike Conroy (406) 821-3777 tariconroy@webtv.net

Secretary/Treasurer – Pam Essary (406) 777-7028 pamessary@msn.com

Board Members – Jeff Campfield, Tari Conroy, Raynae Redman, Houston Rushing, Arlene Wolf

Newsletter Editor – Tari Conroy 821-3777 tariconroy@hotmail.com

Bluegrassin' is a bi-monthly publication of the **Montana Rockies Bluegrass Association**

Information printed in **Bluegrassin'** is at the discretion of the **Montana Rockies Bluegrass**

Association

Got Something to sell? Advertise in Bluegrassin'!

Full Page – \$25.00, 1/2 Page – \$15.00, 1/4 Page – \$10.00 Classified – \$5.00

Attention: All area band members!

The Inland Northwest Bluegrass Association is presently negotiating with Pete Wernick about presenting a Professional Band workshop the weekend of November 5-7th, 2004 at a location here in Spokane.

Pete's workshops include the following topics:

- Band tightness, rhythm and vocals
- Presentation on stage
- Creating and finding great material
- What people look for in bands
- Getting gigs
- Using the web
- Making more progress in less time
- The basics of good

promo and band graphics
• "Marriage" counseling for bands

• Making CDs. . . recording, promotion and distribution

• Band governing and interpersonal harmony

• Using sound systems
Each band receives an individualized set of suggestions from Pete....

and more! The tuition per band would be \$500.

If your band is interested, you need to notify Kathy Murbach at (509) 924-8290 orkatmurbach@juno.com and send a

\$100.00 refundable deposit no later than

March 1st. For additional information about

the workshop, go to Petes' web site (<http://www.petewernick.com>).

Missoula Workshops

Two bluegrass workshops are going to be taught in Missoula this coming weekend, May 8 – 9, 2004.

Jimmy Heffernan will teach **dobro** and **Mark Cosgrove** **flatpicking**. These are 2-day workshops and will be held at Ruby's Inn & Convention Center. For more information on these spectacular workshops check out the website at <http://66.35.110.77> or contact me (406) 546-6327 or John Quakenbush (406) 251-6353. I will be attending the dobro workshop, hope to see you there. **Phillis Erck**

If your band has not notified us of a song selection for the 5th annual MRBA Oldtime Bluegrass Festival CD, we need your song name and number of song on your band CD right away. The new MRBA Festival CD is usually completed by Memorial Weekend (Conroy's campout) and will be available from the MRBA or at Rockin' Rudy's in Missoula and the Music Box in Hamilton. Mike & Tari

THE LEGENDARY EVERETT LILLY AND THE LILLY MOUNTAINEERS IN CONCERT.

MRBA presents....Everett Lilly and the Lilly Mountaineers in concert Sunday evening 7:00 PM, May 23rd at the Chantilly Theater, in Stevensville. This is quite an honor to be able to bring this band in as Everett is a legendary 1st generation bluegrass that started playing professionally back in his home state of Virginia in the 1930's. By the 1950's he had teamed up with Flatt and Scruggs and performed the early Columbia material with them including "Sweetheart You Done Me Wrong."

The original Lilly Brothers (Everett and "B") were the first Bluegrass band to do a professional tour of Japan, and on their next tour they invited Bill Monroe to come along.

The Lilly Brothers were inducted into the IBMA's Hall of Honor on Oct. 17th 2002.

I was able to meet both Everett and his brother "B", while over at the IBMA this last Oct. and am very happy to be able to bring them here in concert. Raynae

Advance Tickets: \$12 general public... \$10 MRBA/Folklore Society members.

At the Door: \$14 general public.... \$12 MRBA/Folklore Soc. members.

Tickets will be avail 10 days prior to the concert at Rockin Rudy's or from Raynae Redman, Ben Essary, or Mike Conroy

Wintergrass Review

By Curtis Rathburn
(formerly of Worcester, MA)

I was very surprised when I was asked to write this review. It's my first West Coast festival, don't you know, and was going to Tacoma on a honeymoon, of sorts, with my girlfriend, and it would be hard to imagine having a bad time. Once in downtown Tacoma, it was pouring rain, like you read about. We got our hotel room, and pretty much ditched everything except our instruments, and high-tailed it to the Sheraton. As soon as we got into the main lobby, the sound of a hundred guitars, mandolin, banjo, basses, fiddles and jubilant voices greeted my ears. Pickers everywhere in circles of 6,7 or 8, strewn about all over the floor, in the balconies, on the stairs, by the elevators, each group able to block out the sound of the other, a phenomenon known only to circle pickers. I sat down & pulled out my flat-top to tune it and before I knew it I was in a circle myself.

We had our schedule out and since we knew that we would

be picking more than wanting to see shows, we picked out the artists we really wanted to see. We headed to the main stage to see Rob Ickes & Andy Leftwich where we saw a fine performance that ended with a breathtakingly beautiful rendition of "The Old Rugged Cross".

On Friday, we had a big lunch and watched Bearfoot Bluegrass play on the Monroe memorial stage. It was very refreshing to hear a group so young but so talented. They played a very good set and I expect they will be at a lot of festivals in the future.

Next we saw the Sam Bush band and true to form, people left in droves during his first few songs. After clearing out the "purists" he settle down and did play some very nice stuff. He plays so fast and has so much energy, he loves his fans so much that I don't care if he's bluegrass or not, I've never seen a bad Sam Bush show yet.

The next day we had the most shows to see so we cut our picking time way down and never traveled too far from the main stage. Kane's River, one of my latest favorites, did a fine job and I'm sure they won some fans with their

performance. Their vocals were crisp and they demonstrated a high level of musicianship and songwriting. It sure was great to see those folks on the main stage, as they certainly deserve it!

The Seldom Scene was it's usual... perfect harmonies as tight as a snare drum. They only get better with time and it looks like they have a blast playing together. Country Current was the surprise of the festival for me. This is a group of Navy musicians and were easily the best traditional bluegrass band at the festival. They were super-rehearsed, not one wasted note and very nice harmonies, each one a master of his instrument. Do yourself a favor and see these guys sometime. We ended it all with a smoking set from a re-united Hot Rize. Dr. Banjo, aka Pete Wernick, bassist Nick Forster, Tim O'Brien got together for this set along with Bryan Sutton on guitar taking the place of Charles Sawtelle, who passed away in '99. It was everything I thought it would be, a very good set by these guys and I hope to catch them again.

Conroy's Memorial Weekend Bluegrass Campout

Mike & Tari's annual memorial weekend campout is again scheduled for May 28 – 31, 04. We will have heated wall tents again this year for jamming. It is still at the Little West Fork Campground, a Forest Service campground with no charge, an outhouse and a creek right next to the campground. Lots of room for bigger rigs to park. The campground is approximately 23 miles south of Darby. Head south out of Darby (approx 4 mi) and take the West Fork highway. Go just past the 14 mile marker, turn right onto the Nez Perce Road, then go 4 miles, the campground is on the right just as you enter National Forest. Signs will be posted. There will be potluck suppers at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and on Monday morning the Conroy's furnish a biscuits and gravy breakfast at 10:00 a.m. Bring your campers and your lawn chairs. All Bluegrass lovers welcome. Y'all Come!

For more info call 821-3777. Or email tariconroy@webtv.net



A very important part... ▲
The kitchen

Another MRBA Old-time Bluegrass festival has come and gone, and oh, what a festival it was! The bands were **great**, the acoustics were **great**, the new place was **great**, the volunteers were **great**, and the



▲ Jammin
in every nook & cranny

bluegrass listeners were **great**.....there was a whole lot of **great** going on!



Thanks to all the musicians for their time and talents, thanks to all the volunteers that took tickets, sold CDs, helped announce, brought food, sold food etc....

MRBA's own
Father of Bluegrass – Dick Darne
with #5 son, Richard ▼

Just too much music for a little guy! ►





Broken Valley Road Show kickin' the festival off. With Damian Mast of Wild By Nature on banjo. ▶ Does that make them = "Broken By Nature"?

◀ New South Fork on stage, with the crowd watching....and the clock ticking. Sorry Tom Middleton on banjo was out of range of the picture.



Cabin Creek singing into Conroy's *really cool* old time microphone. ▼



◀ At the CD table.



Jammin in the back hall ▶



A very special Thanks to Ben & Pam Essary, for working their buns off and the Stevi school for being such a great bunch of folks.

**How To Get Rid of Your In-laws
This Summer**

(and hone your bluegrass singing at
the same time)

by **Ted Lowe**

I used to think that *relative pitch* was like turning off the water heater or letting the pet snake loose in the house—just another good way to get rid of those in-laws who overstay their welcome. Until I went to Mike and Tari Conroys' harmony workshop, that is. About a dozen of us MRBA members convened on March 6th at Ben and Pam Essary's house near Stevensville for an afternoon of instruction and practice in the fundamentals of singing bluegrass harmonies and –of course—lots of jamming and jokes. Ben and Pam were the most gracious of hosts, providing coffee and cookies and generously offering the use of their home for the event.

Mike kicked the whole thing off in true *bluegrass* style with a dazzling, ultra hi-tech, polychromatic multimedia demonstration consisting of a large sheet of paper –like the ones you finger-painted on in kindergarten—and a fistful of magic markers. He drew five horizontal lines, each in a different color. The lines were squiggly –like he'd drawn them with one hand while fightin' the wheel of ol' Widowmaker with the other hand while trying to keep from running over that pickup truck with the ten kids in the back—but each line paralleled its neighbor in its own squiggly sort of way. Then he labeled each line, from bottom to top: bass, baritone, melody, tenor and high baritone. About this time I began to realize that I was going to learn a lot, because up till then my

understanding of lead and harmony was pretty murky. If you'd asked me about harmonizing before I would have mumbled something like, "there's the melody, and the tenor part is all that yellin' and screechin' "up there" and the baritone is all that hootin' and hollerin' down there somewhere underneath it." Mike and Tari went on to explain that the tenor part is simply the next note of the chord above the melody and the high baritone is the next note of the chord above that. Similarly, the baritone is the next note below the melody and the bass is the next below it. Well, it made sense to me when *they* explained it, so ask them if you're confused.

Anyway, this is the part where the *relativity* comes in. Since there is no way for an observer standing on earth to determine whether a given frame of reference is at rest or is moving at a constant velocity in a straight line, the laws of physics must be the same at different inertial reference frames. Oops, wrong theory. (Actually, Mike does look a little like Einstein, if you made him two feet shorter and got him to grow his hair down to his shoulders. I wonder which would be harder to do?) What Mike and Tari *really* showed us is how the different singing parts are all relative to each other. In other words, the first note of a song *can* be the root (1st) note in the key of the song (e.g. the first 'pines' of "In the Pines"), but it ain't necessarily so. The 'say' in the chorus of "Banks of the Ohio" is the 3rd note, which is for some reason the most common case in bluegrass tunes. Hmm, maybe somebody should write a proposal for a government grant to study this phenomenon in more detail. Just don't forget who

gave you the idea when that big check arrives.

So anyway, after explaining the second and previously unpublished general theory of relativity, Mike and Tari demonstrated singing the different parts and gave us participants a chance to find them ourselves. Then there was a discussion about dynamics, phrasing, blending and the like. Turns out, finding the right notes to sing is the easy part of harmonizing; it takes lots of practice to get those notes to balance with the lead and blend to that pleasing "ring" that we all know and love. The Conroys attempted to demonstrate what "bad" harmonies sound like, but they failed miserably—they've just been singing together too long to sound bad. They should have had *me* demonstrate, I'd a showed 'em a thing or two! After that we sang a couple songs as a group, and then had a great pickin' session with lots of singing to try out those new skills. By that time we were all hungry, so Pam ordered up some tasty pizza and Ben broke out the beer. Then the jokes took a turn toward the raunchy, and by the time I had to leave things were getting way out of hand. I do not wish to be held responsible for what happened after that.

Good harmonies are, in my opinion, as essential to the bluegrass sound as the fiddle, banjo, mandolin, bass and guitar. The harmony workshop was just one more example of the love and dedication that the Conroys have for bluegrass music, and it was a great way for the MRBA to do what it's meant to do: support and promote bluegrass music in our area. I hope to see more events just like this.

Best quote of the Stevensville festival:

Fred Frank was quoted on stage saying ... "I've been told, the banjo is to music, what the etch-a-sketch is to art"

Hospitality Room at Wintergrass

I was asked by Ben, and Tari to submit an article about our Wintergrass Hospitality suite, and thought it was a good idea just to let all of you know what this was all about. Before I went to the IBMA this Fall, I really had no idea what a hospitality suite was all about either, so in thinking about this I wondered just how many of you don't really know what they are either.

A hospitality suite is a hotel room given to an association or bluegrass festival committee to host an area that is less crowded for jamming purposes, and also allows folks to find out a little more about your association or your festival. In our case we hosted the suite but also included and promoted the Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass Festival.

Phyllis Erck, Curtis, myself, Pat and Sue Davis, and Mary (sorry, can't remember your last name Mary), all teamed up together to help host the suite. Phyllis and Curtis went out and bought some snack foods, pop, and beer, and I stayed in the room hanging our banners, and getting things ready. I had brought a huge bag of gummi bears from Costco and we set them out along with the chips, dip, veggie tray, and other snacks. The liquid refreshments were put into the bathtub on ice and we were ready. The first evening there, Thurs. it wasn't long before several folks were coming in and jamming with us. I was surprised at how popular our room was. We made lot's of new acquaintances and took a few new memberships, sold a little of our merchandise, and just basically had a great time in our suite. It ended up that we be-

came known as the suite with the gummi bears and people would pop in looking for them. The following morning Pat Davis was coming in early to help tidy up from the previous evening and had a great surprise happen. As he started to open the door to our room who should come out of the room right next door to our suite? Sam Bush, and he just greeted Pat with a "know anyplace to get a decent cup of coffee?" It was our secret the rest of the weekend. We had a great time and this suite was given to us for free. The gal in charge of things was very pleased with how we hosted it and has offered it to us again next year. So for all of you who were like me and wondering just what the heck a hospitality suite is now you can say you know. Come on over to Wintergrass next year and join in the fun.

Raynae Redman

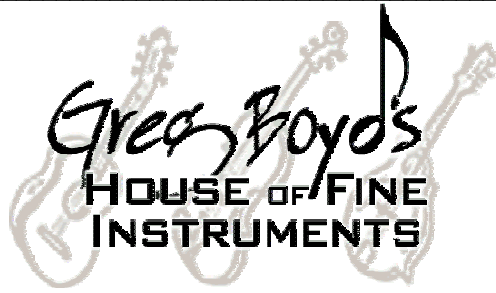
Membership Application
MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION
 333 Pine Hollow Road, Stevensville, MT 59870

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone No. _____

E-mail _____ Individual (\$10.00) _____ Family (\$15.00) _____



**PROUD SPONSOR
BITTERROOT VALLEY BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL**

**If you are not browsing OUR website,
you are not shopping!**

**Roy Noble / Bourgeois / Collings
Weber / National / Vintage Martin / Beard
Prucha / "Pro" Banjo Parts**

**Best inventory of bluegrass instruments and pro
accessories in the entire Northwest**

CENTRALLY located in Missoula, Montana

(Just one block down from Boyce Lumber off Russell on Knowles St.)

HOUSE of FINE INSTRUMENTS

HOURS:

2:00pm til 6:00pm Tue thru Fri

All other times by appointment

(406) 327 - 9925

www.gregboyd.com

SECURE Online ordering



Ruby's Inn
&
Convention
Center

4825 N. Reserve Street
Missoula, MT 59808
406-721-0990
800-221-2057

During your next stay in Missoula
or
When planning your next event

**THE MOST BLUEGRASS FRIENDLY
HOTEL IN MONTANA**

Free hot breakfast buffet daily 6 – 10am

Free soup/dessert 5:30 – 8:30pm

Free airport shuttle

Close to major shopping district

Quiet picnic area on Grant Creek

Outdoor pool/hot tub

Guest laundry

Full-service catering

6 meeting rooms

Free local calls

Located off I-90 exit 96, 1/4 mile on right



AN INVITE:
 JAMES AND BEVERLY DODD, INVITE ALL OUR PICKING AND NON PICKING, BLUEGRASS OR ANY KIND OF MUSIC, FRIENDS TO OUR HOME THE WEEK END OF MAY 21 - 23, FOR A WEEK END OF MUSIC AND FUN TO HELP US CELEBRATE THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OF OUR DAUGHTER, BRITTANEY, ON MAY 23 AT 2:00 IN LAVINA HIGH. BRING TENTS, MOTOR HOMES, CARS, TRUCKS, LAWN FURNITURE WE DON'T CARE THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM, EVERYONE IS WELCOME. POT LUCK BREAKFAST AND DINNERS DAILY, MUSIC WHENEVER A CIRCLE FORMS. HOPE TO SEE Y'ALL HERE. QUESTIONS CALL OUR HOME AT 406-575-4266

ATTENTION:
 We have set up the address label on your newsletter to be your membership card, please clip it out and use if for proof of your membership to the MRBA.

MONTANA ROCKIES BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
FIRST MONTH FREE!

\$12.95*
 PER MONTH

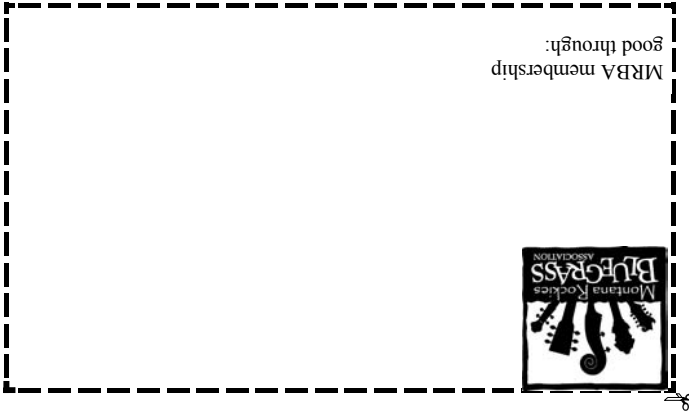
* If paid by credit card - \$14.95 if not by paid by credit card.

DIAL-UP ACCESS

- 9400 LOCAL U.S. DIAL-UP ACCESS NUMBERS
- LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED
- WEB-BASED EMAIL ACCESS
- TWO EMAIL ACCOUNTS PROVIDED
- 10M PERSONAL WEB SPACE
- FREE TECHNICAL PHONE SUPPORT

CENTRIC
 Internet Services

1410 SOUTH RESERVE MISSOULA, MT 59801
 PHONE: 406.549.3337 FAX: 406.549.9337
 WWW.CENTRIC.NET



333 Pine Hollow Road
 Stevensville, MT 59870

